reality that compels the post-colonial subject to endless impoverishing. To the author, humour points to the diversity, wildness and spontaneity of social life outside formal associations, the unmapped spaces where the governor and the governed blend into a spectrum of possibilities.

In Chapter 4, 'Siddon Look' (titled after a phrase in Nigerian parlance which means sitting and watching but not participating nor interested in the event going on), the author made use of specific instances of successful invocation of silence to promote a non-organisational understanding of civil society and the possibilities of informality. Obadare focused on silence in order to juxtapose that humour (verbal) and silence (non-verbal) are related nodes in a communicative continuum. He sees the examination of silence and its possibilities as a useful strategy for rethinking the scholarly axiom which states that 'only voice can provide a way to political participation'.

In Nigeria, the resort to Siddon Look in principle is an invocation of silence stemming from the backdrop of state-sponsored violence and systematic persecution of enemies of the state. Obadare notes that silence is not necessarily the absence of speech but that specific social and political realities give rise to it. He also shows how silence is a part of discourse and language rather than the antithesis of communication. Silence can be a form of protest or a choice to avoid conflict against the logic of the political milieu and its underpinning ethos. Obadare posits that silence was the best way of giving voice while at the same time evading the penalty that open speech attracted in Nigeria under military rule.

Conclusively, the book is unique and innovative. Obadare achieved his aim of giving the idea of civil society in Nigeria a non-associational outlook. He also succeeds in showing silence and humour as major strategies used to promote the non-associational nature of civil society. However, Obadare's use of advanced terminology in the book will make it difficult for the ordinary reader to comprehend.

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Histoire du politique au Congo-Kinshasa by GAUTHIER DE VILLERS
Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia L'Harmattan, 2016. Pp. 333. €36 (pbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X16000719

Written in French, Gauthier de Villers' book spans a bridge between fine-grained historiography of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire, hereinafter 'Congo') and a wealth of conceptual approaches that aim at making sense of post-colonial statehood and politics at large.

The book is organised in two main parts: in the first, more chronologically organised half, de Villers outlines the country's room for manoeuvre across changing international policy and power relations since 1960. It is followed by a second half in which the author works through a more cyclical timeline that describes the different epochs and trends from the very beginning of the Congolese (and then soon Zairian) state, all the way through its eventual decay into an ambiguous period of 'reconstruction' and 'transition' throughout the past two decades.

De Villers aims neither at proposing an overarching history of the Congo (such as Ndaywel è Nziem or van Reybrouck) nor a thick analysis of a particular period and region (such as Verhaegen, Schatzberg, Stearns, or Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers). In contrary, the main intention of *Histoire du Politique au Congo-Kinshasa* seems to be a dialectic engagement with post-colonial historical events and concomitant theoretical trends to explain larger governance and power dynamics that shaped and continue to shape Congolese politics and the state.

In doing so, the book successfully proves how politics in and political analysis of the Congo have developed parallelisms – e.g. the heydays of dependency theory in the 1970s and the Mobutist state's concomitant engagement with Western allies during this era but also more recently, e.g. when it comes to dogmas of state-building. Drawing from a few decades of studying the Congo, de Villers displays an impressive memory and command of sources, which – even if the past years receive comparatively less scrutiny – is of great help to any scholar of the region.

Without specifically explaining his choice of conceptual approaches, de Villers offers a dense garland of liberal, critical, and institutional theory to investigate the social, economic and political realities of post-colonial statehood and power struggles in a case as contested as the Congo. Perhaps though, the chronological-cyclical structure of the book makes for some of the used concepts standing slightly isolated while in fact they may intimately speak to each other (or criticise one another, such as with Olivier de Sardan's critique of Bayart or Chabal/Daloz).

In sum, de Villers offers a thorough and rich account of the Congo's post-colonial political history. The book's particular strength lies in its comparative assessment – identifying continuities and ruptures – of the country's first four to five decades of independence as well as its unique combination of historical-descriptive and theoretical-analytical techniques to shed light on the Congo's intricate and complex politics and society. An important read for Congo researchers and a timely reminder of how much we can, despite a rapidly changing world, learn from history.

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Mobilizing Transnational Gender Politics in Post-Genocide Rwanda by RIRHANDU MAGEZA-BARTHEL
Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 1 + 187. $109.95 (hbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X16000720

Rirhandu Mageza-Barthel's new book, *Mobilizing Transnational Gender Politics in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, represents a valuable contribution to understanding gender equality policies in present-day Rwanda. It offers a crucial middle ground between popular media accounts that celebrate the nation for its impressive inclusion of women in politics – most notably, the 2013 parliamentary elections in which women candidates secured 64% of the available seats – and academic accounts that warn that while women's visibility in